

first responders, and the National Guard who are working tirelessly to ensure that communities throughout the State enjoy the eclipse festivities safely. These public servants have been a shining light in making sure Oregonians and visitors alike have the best experience while viewing the solar eclipse.

As the eclipse arcs across the country and folks from the West Coast to the East Coast don their eclipse glasses to look up at the darkened sun, it is my sincere hope that it ignites a ray of passion in students throughout the country to explore STEM fields more deeply.

THE USS "WEST VIRGINIA"

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the service of the first ship named for our Nation's 35th State—our only State born of war—the armored cruiser USS *West Virginia*. She was commissioned on February 23, 1905, and served in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets. On two occasions, she deployed to Mexico to enforce U.S. diplomacy. In 1916, she was renamed the USS *Huntington*, in order to permit the assignment of her old name to a new battleship.

That new battleship—the second USS *West Virginia*—was commissioned in December 1923 and affectionately nicknamed the "Wee Vee." In 1940, she moved to Hawaii and became part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. She was the youngest of all the battleships at Pearl Harbor. During the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the USS *West Virginia* was moored outboard the USS *Tennessee*; as a result, the *Tennessee* was not hit by a single torpedo, while the *West Virginia* was hit by nine torpedoes.

Despite being mortally wounded by shrapnel, the ship's captain, Mervyn S. Bennion, remained on the bridge ordering counterflooding of starboard compartments to prevent capsizing; for his actions, Captain Bennion posthumously received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Captain Bennion's actions are regularly cited as the epitome of proper command under fire.

Displaying a resilience befitting the people of her namesake, the USS *West Virginia* refused to stay sunk. She was pumped out and refloated on May 17, 1942, and sailed to Puget Sound Navy Yard for repairs. After being fully modernized, she saw action in the invasion of the Philippines, the Battle of Iwo Jima, and the Battle of Okinawa, among others. She was present in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, for the formal Japanese surrender.

The USS *West Virginia* was decommissioned on January 9, 1947; her awards included the American Defense Service Medal with "Fleet" clasp; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with five battle stars; the World War II Victory Medal; and the Navy Occupation Medal with "Asia" clasp. An anti-aircraft gun remains at City Park in Parkersburg,

WV; the ship's wheel and binnacle are on display at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. Her mast sits in front of Oglebay Hall at West Virginia University, and Interstate 470 in West Virginia is named the "USS *West Virginia* Memorial Highway."

The U.S. Navy resurrected the proud history of the 35th State's moniker with a 1983 contract to build a Ship, Submarine, Ballistic, Nuclear, SSBN, the 11th of an eventual 18 Ohio-class submarines, otherwise to be known as the USS *West Virginia*, SSBN 736. She was launched on October 14, 1989, sponsored by Mrs. Erma Byrd, wife—and high school sweetheart—of the now late U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, of West Virginia—the longest serving Senator and the longest serving Member in the history of the U.S. Congress—and commissioned on October 20, 1990.

The USS *West Virginia*, SSBN 736 conducts a sacred mission. It has often been said that, if the U.S. Navy could only send one platform to sea, it is the SSBN that executes the most important mission: the mission of strategic deterrence.

Always at the tip of the spear, the USS *West Virginia* conducts operations in order to exploit the advantages of undersea operation. It can be deployed up to 15 months at a time. As the submariner identity states: "We are elite, selective and high performing. We operate forward at the tip of the spear. This is the only survivable nuclear deterrent. Last bastion of master and commander."

West Virginia is proud of the honor, courage, and commitment of the brave sailors who crew and have crewed the USS *West Virginia*, and we are eternally grateful for the sacrifices that you and your families make in service to the United States of America.

"Montani Semper Liberi."

TRIBUTE TO ALAN BAKER AND EARL BRECHLIN

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in 2001, Maine's legendary Ellsworth American newspaper celebrated its 150th year by launching a new enterprise, the Mount Desert Islander, dedicated to covering every aspect of life in a place of extraordinary beauty. It is a pleasure to congratulate the two outstanding journalists who have guided the Islander since its inception, publisher Alan Baker and editor Earl Brechlin, for being recognized with the 2017 Sunbeam Award from the Maine Seacoast Mission.

The recipient of numerous State and national awards for excellence, the Mount Desert Islander is a great example of the value provided by community newspapers. From Acadia National Park, local government, and businesses, to education, sports, and the arts, the Islander's dedicated staff writes the history of their communities as it occurs. They keep people informed and help them be more in-

involved as citizens. They follow State and national issues, always with an eye on how they affect their neighbors.

This dedication starts with committed leadership. After achieving success in journalism and publishing in Philadelphia and New York City, Alan Baker returned home to Maine and, in 1986, joined the Ellsworth American's management team, eventually purchasing the newspaper. In this age of media consolidation, Mr. Baker strongly believes that newspapers should be owned by individuals who are in touch daily with the readers they serve. As a former member of the Maine State Legislature, he is an effective voice for accountability and transparency in all levels of government.

A former "Maine Journalist of the Year," Earl Brechlin has covered Mount Desert Island for more than 35 years, and he has been recognized with more than 100 awards for news, feature writing, and photography. His commitment to journalism is evident in his election as president of both the Maine and New England press associations. A Registered Maine Guide, Mr. Brechlin is the author of nine books that reflect his love for our State's natural beauty, history, and character.

The Maine Seacoast Mission is a non-denominational, nonprofit organization founded in 1905 to support island and coastal communities in Downeast Maine, and its boat, the Sunbeam V, helps to connect people in those communities with essential services and with each other. Through their dedication to the craft of journalism, Alan Baker and Earl Brechlin have strengthened that support and those community connections, and the Sunbeam Award is a fitting recognition of their many contributions.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE JACOB LEINENKUGEL BREWING COMPANY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a true original, the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company, on 150 years of brewing great beer in Wisconsin's North Woods. The Leinenkugels were fairly typical Wisconsinites in the mid-1800s—German, immigrants, and lovers of beer. Jacob Leinenkugel started in the business in 1867 after he and three brothers learned the craft from their father, a brewer and distiller. Together, the Leinenkugel family started four breweries, including the Spring Brewery, which eventually became Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing.

While the Leinenkugel family was typical, the brewery they started became far from ordinary. For a century and a half, the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company has put Chippewa Falls, WI, on the map and excellent beer in the hands of people throughout Wisconsin and the country.

Walk into most any bar in the State and there will be "Leinie's" on tap. Go to a backyard cookout or a Milwaukee